

Research Article

THE IMPACT OF STORE ONLINE REVIEW ON PURCHASE INTENTION VIA EMOTIONAL TRUST AS MEDIATING FACTOR OF SHOPEE FASHION PRODUCT: CASE OF GEN Z CUSTOMER IN HO CHI MINH CITY

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ABSTRACT

The research emphasizes the significance of authentic and positive feedback in shaping customer perceptions, particularly in the competitive field of online fashion retail. Retailers like Shopee are encouraged to focus on maintaining genuine reviews and fostering customer satisfaction to build long-term trust. By leveraging the power of emotional trust, businesses can enhance customer loyalty and increase sales. This research provides valuable insights for e-commerce platforms, emphasizing that prioritizing trust-building strategies is essential for success in today's dynamic online shopping environment.

Keywords: Online review, emotional trust, inconsistent review, purchase intention, Gen Z, fashion product.

INTRODUCTION

Background:

Internet shopping, particularly on platforms like Shopee, has become a dominant trend in Vietnam due to its convenience and accessibility. Among various product categories, fashion has emerged as one of the most competitive markets. However, consumers' trust in the quality and authenticity of fashion products remains a concern, especially for Gen Z customers who rely heavily on online reviews. Emotional trust plays an essential role in bridging the division across customer perception and purchase intention (Gefen *et al.*, 2003). According to Nielsen (2019), 91% of consumers globally rely on online reviews as a key factor in their purchasing decisions. In Vietnam, Gen Z—characterized by their digital literacy—accounts for a significant portion of online shoppers (Statista, 2022).

Shopee, as a leading e-commerce platform, has experienced significant growth. Still, it faces challenges in managing customer trust due to the diverse quality of its sellers. Positive online reviews have been shown to enhance emotional trust, which directly impacts customers' willingness to buy (Kim and Peterson, 2017). However, negative reviews or skepticism about authenticity may decrease trust, leading to hesitation in purchase decisions (Chen *et al.*, 2021). The mediating role of emotional trust is not just significant in facilitating sales but also in ensuring customer loyalty and long-term engagement.

The competitive nature of the online fashion market further emphasizes the importance of customer reviews. As highlighted by James (2011), customer perceptions based on reviews can impact operational outcomes, such as repeat purchases and brand reputation. There are costs associated with loss of customer trust, including reduced efficiency in marketing efforts and decreased

customer retention rates (Tett and Meyer, 1993; Woods and Macaulay, 1989). Understanding the dynamics of emotional trust influenced by online reviews provides valuable insights into the behavior of Gen Z customers. This knowledge is crucial for Shopee and similar platforms to develop strategies that build trust and ensure sustained competitiveness in the market.

Research Problem

An increasing amount of research looks at the impact of online store reviews on consumer behavior, particularly in e-commerce platforms like Shopee. Studies have primarily focused on the correlation among online reviews and purchase intention, but few have examined the role of emotional trust and inconsistent reviews as mediating factors. Emotional trust has emerged as a key element that shapes consumers' perception of online retailers and their willingness to make purchases (Gefen *et al.*, 2003). Inconsistent reviews, on the other hand, are a factor that can create uncertainty for consumers, potentially diminishing trust and affecting purchase decisions (Chen *et al.*, 2021). Despite the increasing importance of online reviews, research that integrates both personal and environmental factors influencing consumer trust, purchase intention, and the impact of inconsistent reviews remains limited.

Previous studies have explored various antecedents that impact consumer behavior, such as product quality, price, and customer service, but the role of emotional trust and inconsistent reviews in these dynamics is often overlooked (Kim and Peterson, 2017). Furthermore, the influence of these factors in terms of online clothing purchases, particularly among Generation Z consumers in Vietnam, remains under-explored.

This investigation seeks to fill this hole by investigating the relationship among online store reviews, emotional trust, inconsistent reviews, and purchase intention on Shopee e-commerce platform. It will provide valuable insights into consumer behavior, offering e-commerce platforms a deeper understanding of how to build trust, manage inconsistent reviews, and improve customer engagement, especially in competitive markets like fashion.

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Objectives of the Study

The goal of this investigation is to investigate the factors that influence the intent to buy on Shopee, particularly the intermediary function of emotional trust and inconsistent reviews. Specifically, the study looks at how emotional trust and inconsistent reviews affect the relationship among online store reviews and purchase intentions. It also assesses the direct impact of favorable feedback, emotional trust, and inconsistent reviews upon consumers' willingness to buy fashion items.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Online Review:

Reviews on the internet play a significant part in influencing consumer trust, particularly in the context of emotional trust. According to Bickart and Schindler (2001), the feedback shared by customers in online reviews has a profound impact on potential buyers' perceptions and emotional connections with a product or brand. This is consistent with Chevalier and Mayzlin's (2006) observations suggest that positive reviews not only build trust but also strengthen emotional bonds with the brand, thereby enhancing consumer confidence and boosting purchase intention. Furthermore, Kim *et al.*, (2011) suggest that emotionally charged reviews, whether positive or negative tend to evoke stronger emotional reactions from potential customers, which can significantly influence their decision-making process. Trust, specifically emotional trust, is often built through the perceived authenticity of others' experiences, and online reviews serve as a reliable source for customers to assess a product's worth. As pointed out by Park and Lee (2019), when consumers read reviews that resonate with their emotional expectations, they are more likely to develop trust and commit to a purchase. Therefore, businesses can leverage emotional trust cultivated through online reviews to strengthen their relationship with customers, increase brand loyalty, and enhance sales performance.

Emotional Trust:

In terms of consumer behavior, emotional trust plays a function for influencing purchasing decisions as well as building brand loyalty. Emotional trust is defined as consumers' belief in a brand or service founded on their feelings and experiences, which may greatly impact the desire to connect with a company (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). According to B2C marketing research, greater doses of emotional trust result in higher satisfaction among clients and repeat purchases. Emotional trust plays an important role when making choices because it impacts consumers' emotional reactions and mental assessments. This study looks at emotional trust as a key factor in Gen Z customers' purchase intent on Shopee Fashion. Knowing the structure of emotional trust enables businesses to develop strategies that strengthen customer relationships, raise brand awareness, and ultimately drive sales in a competitive online marketplace.

Inconsistent Review:

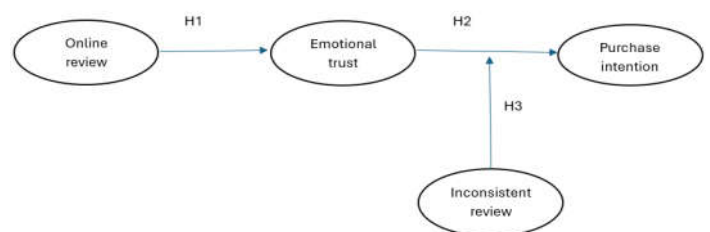
In the online marketplace, inconsistent reviews possess a big influence on customer trust as well as purchasing decisions. Inconsistent reviews refer to mixed feedback from customers, where some individuals share positive experiences, while others highlight negative aspects of a product or service. This creates uncertainty for potential buyers, as they are faced with conflicting opinions that may be challenging to figure out the genuine worth or functionality of an item (Lee and Youn, 2009). According to research, inconsistent reviews can lead to cognitive contradictions, where consumers

struggle to reconcile the differing information presented to them. This conflicting information can disrupt the decision-making process, making it harder for consumers to feel confident in their purchase choices (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). As a result, inconsistent reviews not only undermine trust but also negatively impact purchase intentions, as consumers may hesitate or delay their decision to buy due to the perceived lack of clarity.

Purchase Intention:

Purchase intention is an important indicator of buying habits since it indicates the likelihood that consumers intend to buy a particular good or service. According to Dodds *et al.*, (1991), higher purchase intention correlates with a greater probability of a real purchase, making it an important metric for marketers. Wu *et al.* (2011) found that multiple variables influence purchase intention, including emotional trust and inconsistent reviews. Furthermore, studies show that positive online reviews can boost purchase intentions by increasing brand credibility and trust (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006). Understanding these variables can help businesses maximize their sales strategies.

Proposed Research Model:



H1: Online reviews have a beneficial effect on emotional trust.

H2: Emotional trust has an advantageous effect on purchase intentions.

H3: The association between purchase intention and emotional trust will be strengthened by inconsistent reviews.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

Approaching the research with quantitative method which will potentially investigate the problem stated in the research significance. In other words, these identified issues informed the study's objectives. Subsequently, a conceptual framework was created by reviewing relevant theories, literature, and referenced articles. Based on this framework, hypotheses were formulated, and a questionnaire was designed. Data was then collected in sufficient quantity and analyzed using SPSS Amos software. Finally, the study was documented and concluded, incorporating statistical findings, identified limitations, practical applications, and overall conclusions.

Sampling method and Measurement Scale:

To collect statistics for this investigation, a non-probability sampling technique was applied. This method involves selecting participants based on the researcher's judgment rather than random selection (Hamed, 2016). The specific approach used is snowball sampling, where initial respondents are asked to suggest others who meet the study criteria. This technique is particularly advantageous in cases where the target population is difficult to access or when the sample

size is constrained. Snowball sampling operates similarly to a referral system, where participants play a role in expanding the network of respondents, thereby ensuring a broader and more relevant sample is collected (Hamed, 2016).

This equation estimates the measurement size is 280 participants. In addition, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) employs a participant-to-variable ratio (N:p) of 5:1. With 19 variables included in the questionnaire, the minimum required responses are 160. During the data collection phase, 328 responses were obtained. Although this number is slightly above the expected target, it exceeds the minimum threshold, thereby meeting the requirements for statistical analysis and ensuring data reliability.

The focus of this survey is on Gen Z consumers in Ho Chi Minh City who shop for fashion products on Shopee. Respondents must meet specific criteria, such as being active Shopee users aged 12-27 years old, less or above that not very important so no need to collect too much data for those group. This demographic is particularly relevant, as they are the primary audience for Shopee's fashion offerings. The survey aims to capture their perceptions, experiences, and purchasing behaviors influenced by online store reviews, with emotional trust acting as a mediating factor. Data was collected over two weeks to ensure sufficient responses, providing a comprehensive foundation for analyzing how online reviews and emotional trust influence purchase intentions.

A structured questionnaire survey will be employed throughout this investigation to obtain initial information from the intended participants in a quantitative manner. The survey is divided into three sections: an introduction explaining the study's purpose and the concept of "purchase intention," demographic details such as age, living position, and data collection questions focused on the variables. These questions use a Likert scale with five points, with 1 indicating "strongly disapprove" and 5 indicating "strongly concur," to ensure clarity and consistency. Items for each variable are derived from prior studies to enhance content validity.

DATA ANALYSIS

Demographic information

The research gathered data from 328 participants, with every response being qualified for analysis. The demographic information gathered provides valuable insights into the participants' backgrounds and purchasing behavior. Key data points collected include Age, Living Location, and participants' experience with Shopee fashion products.

Variables	Category	Count	Percentage
Age	Under 12	14	4.2%
	12-27	242	73.8%
	Above 27	72	22%
Living Location	BiênHòa	26	7.9%
	Ho Chi Minh City	252	76.8%
	Others	50	15.3%

Descriptive statistic:

This study focuses on four key variables: Online Review (OR), Emotional Trust (ET), Inconsistent Review (IR), and Purchase Intention (PI). These variables were constructed using multiple items to examine how online reviews influence purchase intention, with emotional trust serving as a mediator. Based on 328 valid responses,

the items for each variable were assessed using a five-point Likert scale to capture the perspectives of Gen Z customers in Ho Chi Minh City regarding Shopee fashion products.

For Online Review, three items (OR2, OR3, OR4) measured respondents' perceptions of review quality. The means, ranging from 3.79 to 3.86, indicated an overall positive attitude, suggesting participants found online reviews helpful and reliable when considering fashion purchases. Emotional Trust was reflected through four items (ET1, ET2, ET3, ET4), with means between 3.63 and 3.72. These results revealed that respondents generally agreed they trust Shopee's fashion product reviews, underlining emotional trust as a significant factor in their purchasing decisions.

Inconsistent Review (IR) was examined using four items (IR1, IR2, IR3, IR4), which focused on respondents' perceptions of contradictory information in reviews. The means, ranging from 3.67 to 3.91, highlighted a slight agreement with the idea that some inconsistencies exist. However, it did not heavily undermine their trust in reviews.

Finally, Purchase Intention (PI) was assessed using three items (PI1, PI2, PI3). While PI1 and PI2 showed positive attitudes with means of 3.77 and 3.78, PI3 had a notably lower mean of 2.22, reflecting disagreement or neutrality about certain factors influencing purchase decisions.

Standard deviation values, where available, showed variability in responses, indicating diverse opinions among participants. Overall, the data demonstrates that while Gen Z customers in Ho Chi Minh City generally trust online reviews and are inclined to purchase fashion products on Shopee, inconsistencies in reviews and specific purchasing factors may moderate their intentions.

Online Review (OR)	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
OR2	328	1	5	3.82
OR3	328	1	5	3.79
OR4	328	1	5	3.86
Valid N (listwise)	328			
Emotional trust (ET)	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
ET1	328	1	5	3.71
ET2	328	1	5	3.72
ET3	328	1	5	3.72
ET4	328	1	5	3.63
Valid N (listwise)	328			
Inconsistent review (IR)	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
IR1	328	1	5	3.67
IR2	328	1	5	3.72
IR3	328	1	5	3.72
IR4	328	1	5	3.91
Valid N (listwise)	328			
Purchase intention (PI)	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
PI1	328	1	5	3.77
PI2	328	1	5	3.78
PI3	328	1	5	2.22
Valid N (listwise)	328			

Cronbach's Alpha:

After adjustment, the Cronbach's Alpha analysis results in Table 7 show that all analyzing objects have parameters that exceed 0.70. The coefficients range from 0.754 (OR2) to 0.883 (IR4), showing strong internal consistency for all variables. Notably, the emotional

trust and purchase intention scales maintain high reliability with the α principles have been 0.801 as well as 0.814, accordingly. These outcomes demonstrate the reliability of the products utilized in the present research, and further removal of variables to improve Cronbach's Alpha is unnecessary.

(IR1-IR4), and Purchase Intention (PI1-PI3). The results indicate strong correlations between the variables, and no additional factors were extracted beyond the expected. Through every phase of the parameters' coefficient loads were more than 0.5, indicating that the measurement model was robust.

Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. Online review: $\alpha = 0.823$			
OR2 7.27	2.481	.681	.754
OR3 7.20	2.822	.640	.793
OR4 7.23	2.576	.716	.717
2. Emotional trust: $\alpha = 0.801$			
ET1 11.34	4.366	.568	.774
ET2 11.33	4.228	.636	.741
ET3 11.29	4.121	.634	.742
ET4 11.39	4.244	.621	.748
3. Inconsistent review: $\alpha = 0.904$			
IR1 11.34	6.671	.793	.874
IR2 11.24	6.255	.797	.874
IR3 11.36	6.910	.791	.875
IR4 11.38	6.855	.766	.883
4. Purchase intention: $\alpha = 0.814$			
PI1 6.28	2.813	.704	.704
PI2 6.10	2.941	.628	.784
PI3 6.33	2.968	.665	.745

Factor	Total Variance Explained						
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	3.404	34.044	34.044	2.971	29.705	29.705	2.375
2	1.902	19.022	53.066	1.500	15.002	44.707	2.216
3	1.626	16.261	69.327	1.205	12.047	56.754	2.006
4	0.588	5.875	75.202				
5	0.507	5.075	80.277				
6	0.483	4.827	85.104				
7	0.452	4.521	89.625				
8	0.403	4.028	93.653				
9	0.330	3.302	96.955				
10	0.305	3.045	100.000				

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA):

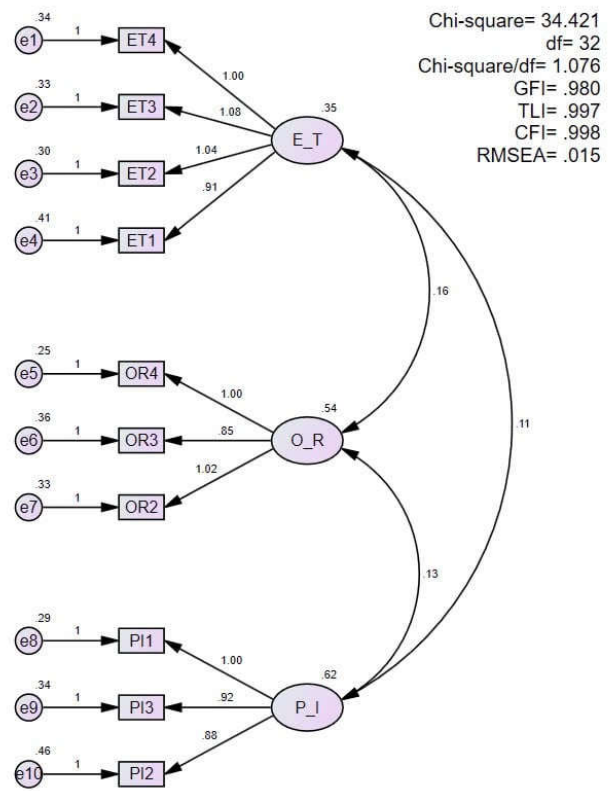
The component evaluation was performed employing the "Principal Axis Factoring" technique and the "Promax" reversing for exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Determine of the Effectiveness of Sampling was 0.773, which exceeds the suitable limit of 0.5 and indicates that the collection quantity is sufficient for factorization. The Bartlett varieties Check of spherical yielded a predicted chi-square tests score of 1157.119 with 45 degrees of freedom (df) and a level of importance of 0.001 or lower. The findings indicates that all of the factors are properly associated and appropriate for factor regression.

According to the suggested criteria for factor loading, any observed variable with a loading factor less than 0.3 was eliminated from the analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2010). To make sure they satisfied the minimal requirements for a legitimate solution, the Eigen value coefficients and the total variance explained by the extracted factors were also evaluated. These findings support the robustness of the research model by confirming the validity and significance of the factor structure that was determined through analysis.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.773
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	1157.119
Approx. Chi-Square	45
df	<.001
Sig.	

The collection of data is considered appropriate for factorization according to a test called Bart of spherical regarding a probability level of 0.001 or lower and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index of sample size of 0.773. The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted with 14 observed variables, including Online Review (OR2-OR4), Emotional Trust (ET1-ET4), Inconsistent Review

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA):



The crucial simulation has a coefficient of measurement of 34.421 and 32 degrees about liberty. A satisfactory match is indicated by the chi-square/df value of 1.076 that satisfies the requirement for a value less than 3. The approaches sufficient is also demonstrated by its accuracy metrics, showing an outstanding match characterized by a Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) of 0.997 and a solid Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 0.998. At 0.980, the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) surpasses the conventional cutoff of 0.90. A great example slipped is also suggested by the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), which is 0.015 and significantly less than the 0.05 cutoff. Together, these findings illustrate how the equation satisfies the required eligibility requirements as it offers an ideal match to the information available.

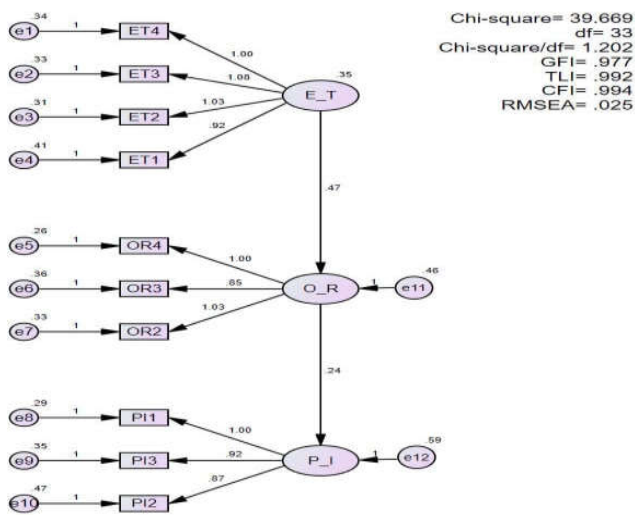
Steenkamp and Van Trijp (1991) claim that the theoretical usefulness of the economic information estimation simulation provides

appropriate and required situations for parallel achievement to earn a variety of measured parameters. The findings from the CFA investigation demonstrate that a ranking structure of the basic structure is consistent with business information while also demonstrating it provides little reason for comparing the noticed parameters' mistakes, resulting having an unilateral gather information.

SEM Model:

The suitability of the study model and hypotheses is determined using SEM concept analysis and AMOS methods. Simultaneously, the model parameters are estimated with the ML approach.

According to the outcomes of the machine learning (ML) calculate method for straight framework evaluation, the hypothesis is permitted about 33 degrees. With a CMIN/df ratio of 1.202 and a chi-square index of 39.669, the proportion meets the requirement for having underneath 2.00. The theory's suitability is further supported by extra fit parameters like RMSEA = 0.025 (much below the 0.05 benchmark), TLI = 0.992, GFI = 0.977, and CFI = 0.994 (all above the sufficient limit of >0.90). Thus, language proficiency is possible to come to inferences the fact that the equation fits with the marketplace data quite effectively.



The results of testing research hypotheses:

Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)							
			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Hypothesis
INT	<--	ZET_MEAN	-.090	.058	-1.544	.123	H1 accepted
INT	<--	ZIR_MEAN	-.373	.060	-6.177	***	H3 rejected
INT	<--	ZPI_MEAN	.064	.059	1.074	.283	H2 accepted

CONCLUSION

The primary goal of the research presented was to investigate the impact of actions on evaluation to buy, with emotional trust just like mediating factor among Gen Z customers on Shopee Fashion products. Our findings highlight the significant role that online reviews play in shaping emotional trust, which in turn impacts buying intent. This investigation provides to the current scholarship by emphasizing the significance of consumer feedback in online shopping behavior,

particularly in the environment of online sales platforms like Shopee. Additionally, it provides valuable insights into how emotional trust regulates the connection of feedback and buying choices. The investigation fills a gap in understanding consumer behavior within the fast-growing online shopping market in Ho Chi Minh City, particularly among Gen Z consumers.

One of the key implications of this investigation is the significance of digital feedback in shaping emotional trust, which in turn influences purchase intention. Given that online reviews are increasingly a major factor in Gen Z consumers' shopping behaviors, Shopee should focus on optimizing the visibility of positive reviews, responding to negative reviews, and fostering an authentic, trustworthy review culture on their platform. Managers can leverage the results of this study to design more effective review-based marketing strategies that encourage customers to leave reviews and engage with them.

Furthermore, the study indicates that inconsistent reviews can erode emotional trust and hinder purchase decisions. To counter this, Shopee may need to implement systems that minimize conflicting opinions by enhancing the review filtering process and emphasizing verified purchases to enhance credibility.

Additionally, while emotional trust and online reviews play crucial roles in driving purchase intention, Shopee could benefit from focusing on improving transparency in review processes, such as ensuring that customers can easily find reliable feedback to guide their purchasing decisions. Strengthening emotional trust will likely lead to higher customer retention, greater satisfaction, and ultimately, increased sales in the competitive e-commerce landscape

This research examines the factors influencing purchase intention, focusing on online reviews, emotional trust, and the role of inconsistent reviews in shaping customer behavior. By exploring the direct and indirect effects of online reviews and emotional trust on purchase intention, this study provides valuable insights into consumer decision-making processes, particularly in the context of Shopee Fashion products. Given the growing importance of online reviews in e-commerce, this research contributes to the literature by highlighting how emotional trust mediates the relationship between reviews and purchase intention, offering useful implications for online retailers seeking to enhance customer engagement and boost sales.

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